

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY NAIROBI IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LAGOS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, US, KE, UG

SUBJECT: PRESS BRIEFING ON KENYA-UGANDA SITUATION

1. DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN, AT JULY 30 PRESS BRIEFING, RESPONDED TO NUMEROUS QUESTIONS RAISED BY BERNARD NOSSITER ARTICLE IN WASHINGTON POST THAT BRITAIN, U.S. AND KENYA INVOLVED IN "ORCHESTRATED CAMPAIGN TO TOPPLE PRESIDENT IDI AMIN." NOSSITER, QUOTING INFORMED SOURCES IN LONDON, SAID IT IS HOPED SUDAN AND ZAIRE CAN BE ENLISTED IN THIS CAMPAIGN. PLAN DESCRIBED BY NOSSITER NOT AS "CLASSIC PLOT" BUT STEADY DRUMBEAT OF ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL PRESSURE TO SPEED ALONG PROCESS ALREADY TAKING PLACE." BRITISH DECISION TO BREAK RELATIONS WITH UGANDA CALLED PART OF CAMPAIGN.

2. FOLLOWING IS TRANSCRIPT OF RELEVANT PORTIONS OF BRIEFING (BEGIN TEXT)

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Q: WASHINGTON POST CARRIES A REPORT QUOTING ANONYMOUS SOURCES IN LONDON SAYING THAT THE UNITED STATES, KENYA, AND GREAT BRITAIN ARE ENGAGED IN A COOPERATIVE CAMPAIGN TO OVERTHROW PRESIDENT AMIN OF UGANDA. DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENT?

A: THAT IS NONSENSE. CATEGORICALLY DENIED.

3. Q: STILL ON THIS. CAN YOU ASSURE US THAT THERE HAVE BEEN NO CONTACTS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND KENYA AND GREAT BRITAIN WITH A VIEW TOWARD EITHER UPSETTING OR DESTABILIZING, WHATEVER TERM YOU WANT TO USE, THE REGIME IN UGANDA?

A: YES, I CAN ASSURE YOU THERE HAVE NOT BEEN.

4. Q: HOWEVER, WE HAVE FREQUENTLY EXPRESSED IN THE PAST RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE REGIME IN UGANDA, IS THAT NOT RIGHT?

A: I DO NOT RECALL WHAT WE HAVE SAID ABOUT IT.

5. Q: TO EXPLORE THAT A BIT FURTHER, DOES THE UNITED STATES AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE ACTIONS TAKEN INDEPENDENTLY, IF YOU WOULD, BY KENYA AND BY BRITAIN IN DEALING WITH THE UGANDAN SITUATION?

A: FOR INSTANCE?

Q: BREAKING OF RELATIONS.

A: THAT IS A DECISION FOR THE BRITISH TO TAKE.

Q: DID THE UNITED STATES HAVE ANY ADVANCE NOTICE OF IT?

A: I DO NOT KNOW.

6. Q: WELL, YOU OPENED UP THE SUBJECT BY A TOTAL DISCLAIMER, SO I WOULD LIKE TO PURSUE THE SPECIFICS.

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A: AGAINST THE SPECIFIC CHARGE.

Q: YES, BECAUSE WHAT YOU WERE ASKED ABOUT WAS NOT ABOUT A PLOT. I UNDERSTOOD YOU ASKED ABOUT COOPERATION BETWEEN THE THREE. AND WE ARE NOW PURSUING THE SUBJECT.

A: FOR WHAT?

Q: COOPERATING IN AN ACTIVE CAMPAIGN TO TOPPLE PRESIDENT AMIN.

A: I DO NOT KNOW THAT THE BRITISH ARE -- I DO NOT KNOW THAT ANYONE HAS THAT --

7. Q: THAT IS WHY I AM PURSUING THE SUBJECT INDIVIDUALLY, THEN, AS TO WHAT THE UNITED STATES ATTITUDE IS TOWARD THE ACTION TAKEN BY BRITAIN, IN ONE --

A: THAT IS WHY I ASKED, "FOR INSTANCE," WHAT KIND OF ACTION?

Q: ALL RIGHT, THE ACTION BY BRITAIN IN BREAKING OFF RELATIONS.

A: THAT IS A DECISION FOR THE BRITISH TO MAKE.

8. Q: DID THE UNITED STATES HAVE ADVANCE NOTICE OF IT?

A: I DO NOT KNOW.

9. Q: HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION. YOU WERE ASKED IF THERE WERE ANY CONTACTS AND YOU SAID --

A: CONTACTS FOR THE REASON THAT HE STATED. CERTAINLY I AM NOT GOING TO EXCLUDE THAT WE HAVEN'T TALKED ABOUT THE SITUATION IN THE KENYA-UGANDA BORDER. WE HAVE EXPRESSED OUR CONCERN ABOUT THAT IN THE PAST ON THE RECORD.

10. Q: WELL, I AM TRYING TO AVOID CHARACTERIZING WORDS AND DEAL WITH SPECIFICS HERE; NAMELY, IF THE UNITED STATES HAS HAD DISCUSSIONS WITH BRITAIN ABOUT THE PROBLEM IN UNCLASSIFIED

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UGANDA AND MADE ANY EFFORT TO TRY TO COORDINATE ITS ACTION WITH BRITAIN. WILL YOU TAKE THAT QUESTION?

A: FIRST, I WILL ANSWER IT. I AM NOT AWARE OF ANY COORDINATED ACTION, BECAUSE I AM NOT AWARE THAT WE ARE TAKING ANY ACTION. I AM CERTAINLY NOT GOING TO EXCLUDE THE FACT THAT WE HAVE HAD CONSULTATIONS WITH THE BRITISH OR THE KENYANS OR OTHER PEOPLE CONCERNING THAT SITUATION.

11. Q: SECONDLY, I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW IF THE UNITED STATES HAS -- WELL, THE UNITED STATES CERTAINLY HAS HAD DISCUSSION WITH KENYA ABOUT THE SITUATION IN UGANDA, BECAUSE THE UNITED STATES IS OPERATING SHIPS THERE AND PLANES IN THE REGION. DOES THE UNITED STATES APPROVE OR

DISAPPROVE OF ACTION THAT KENYA HAS TAKEN AGAINST UGANDA;
NAMESLY, LIMITATIONS ON ITS PETROL AND OTHER SUPPLIES TO
UGANDA? HAS THE UNITED STATES HAD DISCUSSIONS ABOUT
THOSE QUESTIONS WITH KENYA?

A: FIRST, I DON'T BELIEVE WE HAVE A POSITION ON THAT SORT
OF INDIVIDUAL ACTION, JUST AS WE HAD NO POSITION ON THE
BRITISH ACTION. WE HAVE CERTAINLY BEEN DISCUSSING THE
SITUATION ON THE UGANDA-KENYA BORDER IN LIGHT OF UGANDAN
THREATS, AND WE HAVE SAID ON THE RECORD THAT WE HOPE THAT
THE SITUATION THERE WOULD CALM DOWN AND THAT THERE
WOULD NOT BE ANY VIOLENCE.

12: Q: EXCUSE ME, THAT STILL DOESN'T ANSWER THE
SPECIFIC QUESTION. HAS THE UNITED STATES HAD DISCUSSIONS
WITH KENYA ABOUT THE REDUCTION OF SUPPLIES TO UGANDA OR
OTHER ASPECTS OF PUTTING PRESSURE ON UGANDA?

NOW, EITHER NO COMMENT THE QUESTION OR TAKE IT. OR SOME-
THING.

A: I WILL TAKE IT.

13. Q: ON THE SAME SUBJECT, JIM PUT HIS INITIAL QUESTION
, TO WHICH YOU GAVE THE RESPONSE "NONSENSE." HE PUT IT
RATHER STRONGLY. THE WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE SPEAKS OF A
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STEADY DRUMBEAT OF ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL PRESSURE TO
SPEED ALONG THE PROCESS ALREADY TAKING PLACE, WHICH IS A
CONSIDERABLY SOFTER FORMULATION THAN THE ONE JIM USES.
IS THAT ALSO NONSENSE?

A: I DO NOT KNOW THAT. I DO NOT KNOW OF ANY
ECONOMIC PRESSURE -- WE ARE NOT ENGAGED, AS FAR AS I
KNOW, IN ANY PRESSURE OR ACTIONS AGAINST UGANDA.

Q: WELL, AS FAR AS YOU KNOW -- WE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE THE
QUESTION ANSWERED SPECIFICALLY. WILL YOU TAKE IT,
PLEASE?

A: I WILL SEE IF THERE IS. IF I AM WRONG, I WILL BE BACK
TO YOU.

14. Q: BOB, JUST TO GET A LITTLE MORE SPECIFIC ON YOUR
ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION, THE UNITED STATES, FOR SOME YEARS
NOW, HAS HAD ITS EMBASSY CLOSED IN UGANDA. I WOULD ASSUME
THAT THAT IS INTENDED AS A SIGNAL OF SOME KIND OF DIS-
PLEASURE, ISN'T IT?

A: I THINK, AS I HAVE INDICATED IN THE LAST SEVERAL DAYS OR LAST WEEKS ON THAT VERY QUESTION, TED, I RECALL THAT WE CLOSED OUR EMBASSY THERE BECAUSE OF OUR CONCERN ABOUT

THE SECURITY OF OUR PERSONNEL WHO WERE STATIONED THERE. WE DID NOT BREAK DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS --

Q: I UNDERSTAND THAT, BUT WE WERE UNHAPPY ABOUT THE LACK OF SECURITY FOR OUR PERSONNEL IN UGANDA. THEREFORE WE ARE EXPRESSING IN DIPLOMATIC FORM A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF DISPLEASURE AND TRYING TO APPLY PRESUMABLY SOME PRESSURE TO GET THE SITUATION TO CHANGE. SO ISN'T IT SOMEWHAT LUDICROUS TO SUGGEST THAT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT IS NOT APPLYING PRESSURE?

A: BUT THE REASON FOR CLOSING THE EMBASSY WAS THE PERSONAL SECURITY OF OUR PEOPLE, AND I WOULDN'T CORRELATE THAT WITH THE QUESTION THAT SCOTT OR JIM OR MURRAY ARE ASKING.

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15. Q: AND GIVES EVIDENCE OF NO DISPLEASURE WITH THE GOVERNMENT IN KAMPALA?

A: WE HAVE NEVER STATED ANY GREAT APPROVAL OF WHAT AMIN SAID. MOREOVER, WE STATED OUR STRONG DISAPPROVAL OF UGANDAN ACTIONS AT THE TIME OF THE HIJACKING.

16. Q: THAT IS WHY I AM ASKING THE QUESTION IN THE WAY THAT I AM, BECAUSE IT SEEMS TO ME THERE IS AMPLE EVIDENCE TO SUGGEST THAT THE UNITED STATES IS NOT HAPPY WITH THE GOVERNMENT IN KAMPALA, AND IT DOESN'T SEEM TO BE NONSENSICAL THAT IT MIGHT CONSULT WITH SOME OF ITS ALLIES ON THE SITUATION THERE.

A: I DID NOT SAY IT WAS NONSENSE THAT WE WERE CONSULTING WITH OUR ALLIES. I SAID IT WAS NONSENSE TO CHARGE -- OR THE REPORT -- THAT WE WERE COLLABORATING WITH SOMEBODY TO OVERTHROW AMIN, AND THAT CHARGE IS NONSENSE.

17. Q: COLLABORATING IS A STRONG WORD, BUT, CONSULTATION. YOU WOULDN'T EXCLUDE THAT, WOULD YOU?

A: CONSULTATION TO OVERTHROW AMIN? YES, I WOULD EXCLUDE THAT.

18. Q: LET ME JUST PUT IT IN A DIFFERENT WAY. THAT IS THE PROBLEM WE STARTED OUT WITH, WHEN WE GET A HARD STATEMENT AND WE GET A TOTAL DISCLAIMER. IS THE UNITED STATES

CONSULTING WITH BRITAIN AND WITH KENYA TO TRY TO IMPROVE
THE SITUATION IN UGANDA?

A: INASMUCH AS YOU NEVER ACCEPT ANY OF MY DISCLAIMERS,
I WILL TAKE THAT QUESTION AND I WILL POST A DISCLAIMER.

19. Q: SO THAT WE DON'T LEAVE ANYTHING UNCOVERED, CAN
YOU STATE CATEGORICALLY THAT THE UNITED STATES IS NOT
ENGAGED IN ANY COVERT CAMPAIGN TO OVERTHROW PRESIDENT
AMIN OF UGANDA?

A: YES.
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